

# **Exhibit A**

**Rabbi Ben Zion Halberstam**

**Grand Rabbi of Bobov**

4803-15<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11219

**בן ציון ארי' ליבוש הלברשטאם**  
**אבר"ק באבוב**

January 2, 2024

Dear Honorable Judge,

I am compelled to address you in my capacity as the Grand Rabbi of Bobov, an extensive Orthodox Jewish congregation with a profound historical lineage and a global following numbering in the tens of thousands. It is within this context that I wish to convey my insights regarding Mr. Shimshon Mandel, a congregant of longstanding merit and a personal childhood friend, whose virtues and tribulations I have been intimately acquainted with over the years.

Mr. Mandel's affiliation with our congregation extends back to the tenure of my revered father - Rabbi Solomon Halberstam of blessed memory, who previously led our community. Throughout his life, Shimshon has exemplified the quintessence of kindness and benevolence, consistently going beyond the call of duty to assist others.

Previously, when his financial circumstances were more favorable, his esteemed position within our community was greatly enhanced by his ability to provide substantial spiritual, emotional, and financial support to those in need. Now, despite facing financial hardships himself, his moral integrity and dedication to the community remain unwavering. His humility, more pronounced in the face of personal adversity, continues to endear him to his peers. They admire him not only for the support he once provided but also for his resilience and continued role as a source of wisdom and guidance. This shift in his fortunes has not diminished his stature but rather has deepened the respect and affection with which he is regarded, highlighting his true altruistic spirit and kindness.

In addition to his communal roles, Shimshon is a devoted father to eight sons, all of whom have been nurtured within the educational institutions established by our congregation. His paternal warmth and dedication to instilling values of kindness and lawful conduct in his children are exemplary.

The demise of Esther, his beloved wife of 45 years, has profoundly impacted Shimshon, leaving a palpable void in his spirit. He confides that his enduring purpose remains in being a pillar for his children and grandchildren, recognizing their reliance on his paternal presence.

Your Honor, while it is not my place to ascertain what constitutes justice in this matter, it is my intention to illuminate the character of Shimshon Mandel as I, and many within our community, have witnessed. In our Orthodox faith, we hold the principle of remorse as a crucial step towards rehabilitation and renewal. Shimshon's expressions of

regret and self-reflection have left an indelible impression on me, an aspect I felt compelled to share in this context.

I appreciate the significant responsibility that rests upon Your Honor in the process of deliberation and sentencing. In this pivotal moment, I respectfully urge you to consider the principle of 'Imitatio Dei' — the imitation of the divine virtues of mercy and fairness. May your judgment reflect these highest ideals, offering leniency and kindness in assessing the totality of the individual's character and circumstances.

With blessing and respect.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ben Zion Halberstam". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a prominent initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

Ben Zion Halberstam

Grand Rabbi of Bobov